

HOUSE BILL 2548

By Lundberg

AN ACT to name a bridge on State Route 75 in Sullivan County in honor of the late Private First Class Roy W. Neal.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Private First Class (PFC) Roy W. Neal, who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country on May 28, 1968, while serving in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, PFC Neal followed the patriotic tradition for which Sullivan County and the Volunteer State are renowned by serving with distinction in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, a native of Sullivan County, Roy W. Neal was a 1965 graduate of Blountville High School; he received the honor of being selected the Most Valuable Player on the boys basketball team during his senior year; and

WHEREAS, an honorable member of the United States military, PFC Neal was named Soldier of the Month for April 1968 by the soldiers in his battalion; and

WHEREAS, at the tender age of twenty-one, PFC Neal heroically gave his life in Vietnam on May 28, 1968, when he diverted enemy fire directed at an American convoy heading for Saigon by defending the convoy with a machine gun; after he had exhausted the machine gun ammunition, he fired his side arms until an enemy anti-tank round destroyed his vehicle, taking his life, as well as the lives of two other military policemen who were serving with him; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, PFC Neal did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and to stop the global spread of Communism; and

WHEREAS, PFC Roy W. Neal served with great courage and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Armed Forces, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, PFC Neal's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Sullivan County and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #979 of Kingsport have petitioned this body to name a certain bridge on State Route 75 in their county to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Private First Class Roy W. Neal; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, Bridge No. 82-SR075-6.62 located 2.4 miles south of State Route 126 on State Route 75 in Sullivan County is hereby designated the "PFC Roy W. Neal Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Private First Class Roy W. Neal.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "PFC Roy W. Neal

Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.